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Introduction

In spring 1990, during the latter days of the German Democratic Republic, the initiative was taken to offer hospitality to Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union. This move had been inspired by reports of resurgent anti-Semitism and of imminent pogroms in that part of the world. Any one being able to prove his or her Jewish roots (at least one Jewish parent) was unbureaucratically accepted as a refugee and became eligible for several social benefits. Applications had to be made in East-Berlin. Approximately 4,500 persons did so and, in majority, they also stayed in that city.

Re-unified Germany retained this policy but formalized immigration into a more general quota regulation for refugees. Since then, prospective immigrants have to make an application at the German embassy or consulate in their country of residence. This procedure is complicated and often takes several years. Applicants are allocated to one of the German federal states according to quota regulations. Until now approximately 38,000 Jewish refugees have arrived in Germany. Since Berlin accommodated the first wave of immigration, the other federal states have to accept their share of refugees before Berlin will see considerable numbers of new Jewish immigrants.

Since early 1992, I have been studying this category of recent immigrants in Berlin. Main research objective was to observe and analyze the adaptation process of these immigrants in their new surroundings. To this end an initial survey was held among 68 respondents which resulted in data on a total of 131 persons. This survey contained a number of standardized questions (e.g. age, education and occupation, nationality and ethnic identity, family composition) and also offered the opportunity for a more general discussion of the immigrant's motives for emigration and his perception of his future in Germany. The survey data

not only allowed for some generalization on the characteristics of the entire population but also made it possible to select a smaller number of subjects for further participant observation.

In this paper I wish to offer some explanations on why some Jewish immigrants have had until now (at times even tremendous) success in finding a place in German society and others are much less successful. I especially pay attention to those fields on which the first steps are a pre-requisite for more wide-ranging (practical and cognitive) participation in a given society: housing, work, legal status and education (cf. van Amersfoort 1982). I will show that four types of immigrants can be discerned. Depending on the compatibility of the immigrant's properties with German institutional requirements and expectations follow four typical ways of tackling life in Germany.

The Berlin context

Refugee status gives an immigrant access to a wide range of facilities; housing in a hostel, free language course, re-training or (for people without working experience) schooling, social security or unemployment benefits, and some priority on the housing market. Further advantages of being a recognized refugee are an unlimited residence and working permit and the opportunity for naturalization after seven years of residence. Immigrants who were awarded refugee status in this particular instance enjoy the extra advantage of being allowed to visit their country of origin without loosing their status. This, however, only applies to those who live in Berlin.

Support is also rendered by the Berlin Jewish community (Jüdische Gemeinde). It helps its members with language courses, subsidizes expenses for the religious holidays, supports them in their social needs, runs Jewish primary and secondary schools, offers a whole range of social activities, has a gallery for Jewish artists, and, of course, provides all the necessary religious facilities. Approximately 30% of the immigrants have joined the Jüdische Gemeinde.

Finding work is not easy in present day Germany. Access to a professional position is strongly regulated and usually re-training or schooling are required before the immigrant can find a job. Even the few people who bring matching professional credentials and experience usually have to deal with a labour market on which supply exceeds demand to such an extent that it even poses considerable problems for educated young native job seekers to get started.

The Berlin housing market is not easily accessible. The coming down of the

Berlin Wall and the subsequent proclamation of Berlin as the federal capital have put high pressure on the local real estate market. This especially concerns the non-social, free segment of the market where, as a consequence, prices have rocketed during the past five years. Apartment seekers do not have to limit their search to the free market. There are some alternative ways to find an apartment. The immigrant may apply for a certificate (Wohnungsberechtigungsschein, WBS) which gives him access to parts of the housing market which are reserved for urgent and socially deprived cases. Part of this section of the housing market is covered by housing associations, but as their apartments are very sought-after and only rarely change hands, they often do not even accept new potential tenants on their waiting lists. There are also private investors who build for the social segment of the housing market (in return for state subsidies), but they are free to decide which candidate (with a WBS) they want to accept as tenants. Lastly there are large stocks of affordable apartments in pre-war houses (which often do not fit modern standards). Whatever avenue the apartment seeker follows, he has no automatic right to an apartment and in most cases will have to find a house owner, an agency or a real estate agent who will accept him as a tenant. In many cases the person who decides on the application will expect a bribe. This is not uncommon among Germans, but is certainly customary for foreign newcomers on the Berlin housing market. Many Jewish immigrants find their apartment using connections with »Russian friends« (usually established immigrants who came to Berlin one or two decades earlier), and this severely restricts their general access to the housing market.

Immigrant children usually land on a normal school. In some instances parents find other schools more suitable; the Russian school (originally for children of Soviet military personnel in East-Berlin) or a special international school. Young people without job experience have the opportunity to learn German and subsequently visit an institute for higher education or to participate in a job market oriented training program (e.g. computer specialist, logistics, middle management) from the local authorities (Senat) and the employment exchange. By means of normal schooling and these special facilities, young immigrants already have much better chances for full participation than most of their parents have.

The population

Almost without exception, the Jews who came to Berlin have an urban background and come from Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic states. According to my

survey, the largest groups come from Moscow (20%), Dnepropetrovsk (13%), Riga (12%), and Odessa, Kiev, and St.Petersburg (9% each).

In general, the immigrants who came to Berlin have educational and professional levels which are above average for the entire Soviet population and so was their economic and social position in the Soviet Union. Near to three quarters of the immigrant population has a professional, artistic, college or university background. Although this seems to imply good preconditions for participation on the German labour market, it should be brought to mind that many of these persons held positions which have no equivalent in Germany (or other Western countries). Economists are a clear case in point. But also teachers and, to a smaller extent, technicians have qualifications which are not recognized in Germany. Less problematic in this respect is the position of persons with a medical training.

The immigrants are relatively old. The majority of immigrants (46%) is between 26 and 45 years of age. People over 45 make up 19% of the population. The category of 20 to 26 years of age constitute 11% of the immigrants. The remaining 24% are younger (data from 1991). It seems safe to assume that people become less flexible as they get older which implies extra complications in the process of adaptation.

In spite of the German government's policy to offer a safe haven for the Jews of the Soviet Union, this does not mean that all immigrants who come under this provision are Jewish. First of all, there are spouses of Jewish immigrants who themselves belong to another nationality. (In the Soviet Union every citizen had a distinct nationality; e.g. Russian, Ukrainian, Latvian. One of those was »Jewish«.). Secondly, there are those who were defined by the Soviet authorities as being Jewish but did not feel this to be their real (self) identity. They rather considered themselves to be Soviet or Russian. Thirdly, there are those immigrants who managed to procure documents testifying their Jewish identity. This category has two sub-categories, viz. those who bought such papers without being Jewish in any sense, and those who do actually have Jewish ancestry but (who's family) managed to cover-up this fact so thoroughly that they now have to take recourse to such means in order to restore their Jewish identity.

According to my survey 20% of the population neither were defined as Jewish by the Soviet authorities nor did consider itself to be Jewish. 69% were defined as belonging to the Jewish nationality by Soviet bureaucracy and 11% was not but nevertheless considered itself to be ethnically Jewish because of one Jewish parent. I asked this latter 80% of my informants how strong they considered their Jewish identity to be:

Level of Jewish identity (n = 103)

category	Jewish identity	percentage
A	strong, incl. religion and/or tradition	22%
B	less clearly defined but strong	19%
C	important but not pervasive	10%
D	not important but present	18%
E	none whatsoever	31%

Adding those 20% who are not Jewish one way or the other, 41% of the total immigrant population belong to categories A (17%), B (15%), and C (8%) (whereby the latter two categories are not unambiguous; figures are rounded off). This means that around 60% of the population was socialized into Russian culture (or Ukrainian or other culture which was dominant in the part of the Soviet Union they originate from).

Motives for emigration

Peterson makes the useful distinction between conservative and innovative migration: »Some persons migrate as a means of achieving the new. Let us term such migration innovating. Others migrate in response to a change in conditions, in order to retain what they have had; they move geographically in order to remain where they were in all other respects. Let us term such migration conservative.« (1964: 275) Among the Jewish emigrants who land in Germany, the largest category consists of those who hope to retain what they had achieved. Some of them could be considered to be true refugees (which I would define as all push and little or no pull), persons with little alternative left but to leave. Generally, however, migration just seemed the only way to keep up a satisfactory level of existence. When children are involved (which is the case with around 65% of the immigrant households) a satisfactory existence level obviously also includes them and their future perspectives.

Those persons who migrated out of a desire to better themselves in material or other respect are, generally speaking, young, socially unbound (i.e. no children) and not yet professionally established. There are some market exceptions though; people who do have a family and/or accomplished something professionally. This latter category then usually consists of high achievers who's previous horizon simply did not reach far enough. The number of persons who's migration could be called innovative is relatively small.

Most people came because of the political and economic uncertain future they were facing. This is a problem which does not specifically concern Jewish people but pertains to many or even the majority of people in the former Soviet-Union. Only in a relatively small number of cases anti-Semitism was mentioned as a reason for leaving. Four percent of the immigrants said this to be their primary reason for going and another twelve percent reported this as one important reason among others.

Although age and social bounds are not the only factors which indicate whether a migrant came out of conservative or innovative grounds, a quick look at the age distribution of the immigrant population makes clear, furthermore, that the majority of these migrants, in all likelihood, came because of what they feared to loose economically and much less so because of what they hoped to gain.

Adaptation strategies

The immigrant brings certain expectations on what he hopes to achieve in his new surroundings. These expectations tend to be compatible to those which are considered to be commendable in German society, viz. earning money, achieving professional status, having good housing, and securing a future for the children. Less congruity tends to exist between the accepted and/or perception on the suitability of the means to achieve these goals (cf. Merton 1949).

The German authorities have developed a whole range of institutions to aid the immigrant's entrance into German society. A number of those have been mentioned earlier. The use of these avenues may, however, not bring the immigrant to his desired goal or, at least, he may perceive this to be the case. As a result immigrants often tend to behave differently from what German policy makers and politicians expect them to do. On the other hand, in a number of instances the immigrants do follow the institutionalized avenues. Either because they do expect this to bring them what they aspire or because they have no better alternative.

Broadly speaking, the immigrant has three options: he may rely on the social networks he has managed to establish after his arrival, he may put his hopes on the institutionalized mechanisms of the German state or he may cleverly use both these avenues according to the problems and options at hand. Dealing personally with German institutions is more difficult (requires command of the language, knowledge of social conventions and a certain forwardness) but also more rewarding than relying on compatriots.

After his arrival the immigrant is eligible for social security benefits. In principle this is meant as a temporary aid until the immigrant finds a job or becomes a student. Finding an occupation almost always involves the employment exchange (Arbeitsamt). In most cases an immigrant does not directly fit into the German labour market. With few exceptions, immigrants do not speak German and have qualifications which do not correspond to German requirements. Therefore, the immigrant will receive re-training and a language course. During and after this stage he receives unemployment benefits. If he does not manage to find a job afterwards himself, the immigrant perhaps may be invited to join a temporary work scheme (Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahme, ABM), initiated and funded by the Ministry of Labour.

Many of the immigrants seem to take this pre-conceived avenue. Only few have, as yet, found a regular job. Some are currently occupied in an ABM-job and many are still following some kind of schooling. Although these immigrants are not supposed to remain on social security quite some of them take a very long time to enter the realm of the employment exchange. Even as long as three years after their arrival some immigrants have not yet joined a language course and are still recipients of social security benefits. They are content with their economic position or consider following a language course to be a waste of time. »If I had a job I would learn German fast enough. It is no use learning a language in a school. You need practise to learn it properly. (...) I might consider going there when I have nothing else to do.« (specialist in the Moscow fire brigade, 37, in Berlin since April 1991). His wife (architect, 40) would like to follow a language course but has not found it possible to combine schooling with the care for her two sons (8 and 10). Her husband has, however, not found a job nor does he manage to make himself independent as an entrepreneur. He is disappointed with German employment policy (»why do they not give us work so that we can make ourselves useful«) and therefore now looks for ways to achieve the latter option. He has no concrete plans with which to approach possible financiers. He does, meanwhile, manage to earn extra money by doing odd jobs which he finds through friends and acquaintances. Several other informants moon-light by working in amusement arcades (mainly filled with gambling machines) where they have

to change money or sell snacks and beverages. This work is badly payed and the employee may have to work at odd hours and without much prior notice. For unknown reasons many of these enterprises are in the hands of Russian immigrants (of an earlier generation).

Other compatriots who migrated to Germany one or two decades earlier have established themselves in the trade sector. Until recently it was common practise for immigrants to enter business relationships with these traders and, for example, sell products to Russian troops still present in Eastern Germany. By now, immigrants gradually have created and entered more heterogenous networks in which also Germans participate. The immigrant either has such connections himself or knows someone who does. This opened up the possibility to do odd jobs (e.g. renovating, car repairs) for Germans.

Not all immigrants operate with the same speed. Some managed to complete their language course within the first year after arrival. Especially among those successful entrepreneurs can be found. In one case, an immigrant managed to set up a consultancy for immigrants from the CIS which employs several other immigrants. His project is funded by the Berlin municipality. In several other cases, immigrants managed to enter the import/export business between Germany and the CIS. Luxury cars and portable telephones are the signs of their success.

Among those immigrants who do follow some kind of schooling, not all are equally motivated. It is not uncommon to pursue financial goals at the same time. This is partly inspired by the desire to buy luxuries but also by the (perceived) need to accumulate enough money to bribe a real estate agent. Doing odd jobs or trading takes much energy and time which can not be invested in studying. Such a strategy, therefore, already predestinates future problems with German conventions.

I have already briefly referred to the different ways in which an immigrant may try to find an apartment. In general the immigrants register with housing associations and inquire about housing opportunities with the local authorities but these activities often do not show immediate result. It has to be noted though that many of the immigrants have fairly high expectations. A large part of moderately priced apartments in the city are still heated with coal and do not have elaborate bath rooms. In the Eastern part of the city older apartments are frequently in a very bad state and in urgent need of renovation. These apartments are relatively easy to get but for most immigrants they do not pose an attractive option or even one they would seriously consider. When an immigrant does not want to content himself with such lodgings, he may have to wait for a considerable time. After some time he may either feel that nothing is done to help him or may plainly find he has to wait too long, and he starts looking for other options.

Basically he has two alternatives: use of a more or less trusted middle man or facing the direct confrontation with German authorities and, especially difficult, entrepreneurs. In both cases he may have to pay a bribe. The price will, however, be higher when he needs the services of a compatriot. It is also possible that he is lucky; the compatriot is a true friend and does not expect to be paid. The chances of getting an apartment without a bribe is much better, however, when the immigrant himself approaches the authorities (Wohnungsamt), a housing association or a real estate agent. This is likely to cost more time, patience and energy but, in all cases I came across, it is much cheaper and often even free of expenses.

»I got my apartment free of charge but at the cost of three years waiting time«, an informant told me who only recently had been offered an apartment by a housing association. He has never pursued any illegal work, he did not feel like bribing someone and he has few connections among his compatriots or among Germans. The apartment is situated in an undesirable part of East Berlin, needs renovating and is too small to his liking. Still, he has moved there.

An informant who found a good apartment in a better quarter of the Western city: »how we found our apartment? Through Russians of course, how else! My husband's brother works in a joint venture (Russian/German) and he got his apartment through a client or colleague, I don't know. But this man had said: when I find you an apartment, I will get one for your brother's family too. (...) What recompense had to be brought, I don't know. It wasn't discussed in my presence.«

Young people without working experience are not eligible for unemployment benefits but are referred to student grants. In case their high school qualifications are of the required level, they may study at a German college or university. Other schooling opportunities are also available to them. Generally, however, he will first of all have to visit a language school. Immigrants of school going age usually visit normal primary and secondary schools. In most cases they seem to do well enough in school. Remarkable is the high number of pupils who visit a gymnasium.

Migration and capital's rate of exchange

The discrepancy between the avenues envisaged for refugees by the German authorities and the actual routes chosen by them obviously to a large extent originates in the different practical and social conditions under which the immigrant used to live in the Soviet Union. This, combined with personal characteristics

ranging from psychological traits to practical abilities, explains for the immigrant's behaviour in the context of his new surroundings. Since these individual characteristics explain everything and therefore, at the same time, explain very little on a more abstract level, it seems useful to adopt Bourdieu's notion of social and cultural capital and his concept of human habitus.

Bourdieu starts from the assumption that the accumulation of capital constitutes society's main structuring principle. He does not restrict this notion to the accumulation of economic capital but extends it to the realms of social interaction and cultural attainment. Social capital exists to the extent in which a person interacts with other persons, »it consists of those resources which result from belonging to a group« (Bourdieu 1992a:63, my translation). Cultural capital consists of upbringing, education and the resulting titles. These types of capital are accumulated along different social routes, many of which are institutionalized. Nevertheless, to an important extent they are exchangeable as well as mutually supportive. Social capital (relations) may help acquiring business opportunities (economic capital), money buys good education and social contacts in good circles (culturally), cultural attainment enhances access to networks in which economic accumulation takes place, etc.

A person's habitus is a product of the way he perceives the world, the capital which he has accumulated and, at the same time, determines the way he handles his capital in dealing with the world (Bourdieu 1992b:123,170). In other words: it determines his taste and preferences, his morals and values and his behaviour. It thus deals with questions like »what is important in life« and »how to achieve these goals«. A person's habitus exists independent of his capital (which, as far as economic and social capital are concerned, might be taken away from him) and is much more stable.

The usefulness of different kinds of capital and their mutual interchangeability is very much limited to the society in which they are established. Educational achievements and academic or professional titles only have a value in a context in which they are recognized for what they are and to the extent that they can be put to use. Social capital depends on relations and they require geographic proximity as they usually depend on regular face to face contacts. Economic capital is the only capital which may keep its value fairly well when transported from one society to another. In other words, migration brings about problems regarding the exchangeability of capital.

In the Soviet Union of the past decades, the accumulation of capital only took place to a relatively small degree in economic form. Money had a limited value. Generally speaking, every one had more money than he could usefully spend. Other vessels for economic capital were limited and took on the form of scarce

consumer goods like cars, television sets, etc. Economic capital also existed in the services needed to maintain such goods and in the regulation of access to goods and services (cf. Shlapentokh 1989). Large parts of the population were active in distributing by means of exchange the products and services they had access to due to their occupation. The normal mode of exchange through money was in the Soviet Union to a large extent replaced by this mechanism. As a result social networks were much more important than they are in Western capitalistic society and much more vital for a satisfactory existence.

In other words: achieving a satisfactory level of existence in a capitalistic society depends to a large degree on the access to economic capital whereas in the Soviet Union the accumulation of social capital was the primary mode to gain material comfort. People who sought to accumulate capital primarily along these roads have acquired a habitus of what I would call (by lack of a better term) »Soviet consumers«.

The accumulation of cultural capital in the Soviet Union was important and to a considerable extent functioned as a compensation for the deprivation of other roads to satisfaction and attainment. There existed a whole range of informal cultural activities in private homes, supplementing the also widespread formal cultural circuit. Artistic, professional, and academic status counted for much, they facilitated access to social and economic capital, and, moreover, they compensated for the many (material) hard ships of Soviet life.

Soviet Jews (in as far as they were defined as Jews by the authorities) were often hindered in achieving academic success or in access to certain influential social circles (e.g. Party, bureaucracy and government). As a result, they sought to accumulate capital in other fields by means of a stronger interest in social relations with like minded persons or in extra efforts to circumvent discriminatory barriers. This was reflected in their upbringing which knew a strong emphasis upon intellectual and professional achievement (in order to be among the few who could not be denied access to higher education because they are simply too good to ignore). I found this was even stressed in families which in other ways did not cultivate a Jewish identity (they, indeed, often enough sought to disregard their Jewishness).

People who had landed in this domain of learning and civilization and thus primarily sought to accumulate cultural capital have acquired a habitus which I would like to call »Soviet cultural elite«.

Types of immigrants and their strategies of adaptation

The immigrants essentially have similar goals as are common in German society. They do, however, often have unrealistic expectations of the ways one should (ideally) follow to achieve them. When, after some time, they have discovered those avenues which are prescribed by German society, they may nevertheless find themselves unable to follow them (completely). This seems to depend on the compatibility of their (cultural) capital and habitus with German requirements. Secondly, it seems to make quite a difference whether an immigrant primarily came in order to save as much as possible of previously accumulated capital or because he primarily hopes to achieve something new.

From this it seems there are two basic dichotomies making up a typology of immigrants: being an innovative or a conservative migrant and having either a Soviet consumer or a Soviet cultural elite habitus. This leads to the following four ideal types of immigrants:

1. the innovative Soviet consumer
2. the innovative Soviet (cultural/scientific) achiever
3. the conservative Soviet consumer
4. the conservative Soviet achiever

The compatibility of the individuals within each of these types with the institutional requirements of German society leads to a typology of adaptation strategies. This typology too has four types:

1. institutional unconventionality
2. institutional conventionality
3. uninstitutional conventionality
4. uninstitutional unconventionality

Although it is certainly conceivable that a person uses different strategies in different fields of action, in reality this appears rarely to be the case.

The first type of adaptation: using the advantages of German support without surrendering personal initiative. Active engagement with German authorities, officials and entrepreneurs. This strategy tends to be successful (sometimes remarkably so). This strategy is typically found among persons with a cultural elite habitus and an innovative goal. When the compatibility of cultural capital is insufficient this will result in flexible re-orientation on the initial goals.

The second type of adaptation: passive surrender to German institutionally envisaged procedures. The immigrant is likely to have a cultural elite habitus and a conservative goal. Regarding housing this will often lead to problems as Ger-

man authorities take little initiative in this respect (in sharp contrast to many other societal fields). The immigrant may become disappointed which may either lead to lethargy or to reliance on familiar strategies (i.e. the use of connections) which will lead to dependency on compatriot middle men.

The third type of adaptation: the immigrant does not succeed in getting what he is striving for (fast enough) by institutional means. He will resort to uninstitutional methods like (concerning work) moon-lighting, black marketering and (housing) bribing. This especially pertains to persons with incompatible cultural capital, conservative desires and Soviet consumer habitus.

The fourth type of adaptation: unconventional and uninstitutional. The immigrant is not able to achieve what he desires (fast enough or in the desired quantities) by institutional means. He will actively seek ways to circumvent institutionally prescribed ways to reach his goals. Instead of using middle men, he will directly deal with German society where necessary and perhaps act as intermediary for compatriots himself. He has innovative goals. His habitus can be both »Soviet consumer« or »cultural elite«, but in the latter case his cultural capital is incompatible with German requirements, otherwise he is likely to use the first type of adaptation.

Conclusion

It has become clear that there are three main determinants which explain the behaviour of Jewish immigrants in Germany. First of all, the compatibility of the immigrant's cultural capital with the institutionalized requirements of German society to a large extend determines the hight of the hurdles that have to be taken. Secondly, what kind of habitus they brought; Soviet consumer or Soviet cultural elite. This strongly determines the attitude vis-à-vis the receiving society and the feelings regarding one's (and one's children's) needs, ambitions, and priorities. In other words, it determines not so much the quantity but more the quality of the immigrants ambitions. Thirdly, the reason why they came; either out of conservative or innovative desires. This factor determines predominantly how much ambition the immigrant brings.

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